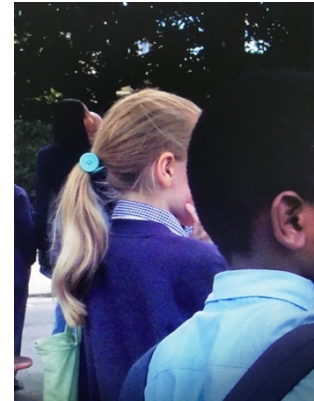


## TraCK- Transmission of COVID-19 in Schools Study

### Information for Headteachers in London

#### The TraCK Study and Schools

Imperial College and PHE have been undertaking a study to measure transmission of COVID-19 since October 2020 in London schools and nurseries in the TraCK (Transmission of Coronavirus in Kids) Study. Based on results so far, children and young people appear unlikely to act as a source of infection in schools, compared with the home. This is very different to infections like scarlet fever or measles. The first part of our study was conducted during periods of reduced school attendance in London. Extensive measures put in place by schools have resulted in many common infections disappearing. As almost all pupils have returned to school, we now need to continue the study into the summer term and would be very grateful if your school could take part.



#### If there is a new case of COVID-19 in your school we need your help!

If your school hears of a newly-identified case of COVID-19, who has been in school at a time they were likely to have been infectious, we would like your help, by contacting us as soon as possible by email or phone (Contact details overleaf). We would like you to help us find out-

- if pupils sent home to isolate (the “bubble”) are willing to take part in our research?
- If pupils still in school are willing to take part?
- if the newly-identified case is willing to take part ?

We have leaflets that are ready to be sent out by email, or as hard copy by hand, or by post for the classroom contacts as well as the new case. The leaflets have an explanation of the study and a consent form attached; there are also leaflets for pupils so that they understand that the study is happening and have a chance to agree or not. Parents or guardians can return these to us directly if they consent.

#### What does the study involve for my school?

**The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) provides £600- £1000 for each school that participates, as reimbursement for staff time involved**

If your school takes part, we will ask you to send or give leaflets about the study to the possible participants as soon as possible after hearing about the new case- if you routinely use text messages to contact parents, this might alert them to the study. We would ask you to send the leaflets to

- parents or guardians of the newly identified Case
- parents or guardians of pupils in the isolating ‘bubble’
- parents or guardians of pupils in a classroom group that has not been sent home (this might be an adjacent class or it might be the ‘non-bubble’ members of the class that has been affected).

The leaflet asks parents to contact the Study Team to give their consent, or asks them to return it to the Study Team via the school. For pupils who consent, we take weekly throat and nostril swabs, a cheek swab, and use a highly sensitive PCR test to check for COVID-19, to rule out transmission among the pupils we are checking over a 3 week period. This

means visiting your school weekly to test the pupils who consent. We also visit any pupils self-isolating at home, as testing the close school contacts is of great importance. When we visit the case at home, we collect saliva samples as well as the regular swabs, and invite their household contacts to take part; we also take environmental samples in the home. We can include school staff if they wish.

**The research team** We time our visits around the school day and try to get everything done in one weekly visit. We just need a quiet place to take the swabs from the pupils who agree to take part -and usually the support of a member of staff to bring pupils to us. We check that pupils consent too using age-appropriate assent forms. The time taken for swabbing depends on the number of pupils being swabbed, but is usually no more than 2 hours. The team will usually number 2-3, will always wear PPE, and are regularly PCR-tested for COVID-19.

**Environmental sampling.** As part of our work to detect COVID-19 in schools, we will ask to undertake surface swab testing of classroom items, and air sampling when we visit the school each week. We do this in a few classrooms, and the washrooms. This takes about 45 minutes and is not dangerous. Our studies so far show minimal amounts of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) in schools compared with homes, suggesting that contamination in the school environment is exceedingly rare.

**Results of the investigations** The results for individual children will be fed back to their families, and teachers will be notified of their own results. The GP and NHS Test & Trace will be informed if a result is positive. The overall outcomes of the study will be reported back to your school and participants at their request.

**Safeguarding** All contact with children will be undertaken by qualified professionals who can work with children. This will usually be a nurse or doctor and may be accompanied by a technician. Healthcare staff undertake safeguarding training and all our staff have enhanced DBS checks.

**Confidentiality.** All confidential information related to participants will be kept by the study nurse or doctor, the NHS lab processing samples, and PHE. Samples will all be coded. For more information about how we look after data please visit <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/hpru-amr/patient-and-public-information/schools-transmission>

**Who has approved the study?** The study has full ethical approval from an independent national Research Ethics Committee and has been peer-reviewed and funded by UKRI.

**If your school is interested in taking part in the study please contact the Chief Investigator Professor Shiranee Sriskandan [s.sriskandan@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:s.sriskandan@imperial.ac.uk)**

**OR contact the Study Team on the TraCK Study phone 07597 510347 email [ramlah.junaideen@nhs.net](mailto:ramlah.junaideen@nhs.net)**

**If you simply want to know more about the study, and see the study leaflets please contact us at [head.ops@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:head.ops@imperial.ac.uk)**

The research is being done by [Imperial College London](https://www.imperial.ac.uk) together with [Public Health England](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england). COVID-19 Research is funded by UKRI in partnership with NIHR. The investigators are, from Imperial College London: Professor Shiranee Sriskandan, Professor Wendy Barclay, and Professor Graham Taylor and, from Public Health England: Dr Rebecca Cordery, Dr. Miranda Mindlin, and Dr Theresa Lamagni